Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	)	
Closed Captioning of Internet Protocol-Delivered	)	MB Docket No. 11-154
Video Programming: Implementation of the	)	
Twenty-First Century Communications and Video	)	
Accessibility Act of 2010	)	

REPLY COMMENTS OF RESEARCH IN MOTION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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REPLY COMMENTS OF RESEARCH IN MOTION

Research In Motion ("RIM") respectfully submits these reply comments in response to the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ("NPRM") issued by the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") seeking comments on the matter of Closed Captioning of Internet Protocol-Delivered Video Programming: Implementation of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (the "Act" or "CVAA"), MB Docket No. 11-154.

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Since the launch of its BlackBerry wireless solutions in 1999, RIM has been responsive to consumer needs in providing innovative accessibility solutions for persons with disabilities including those with hearing loss. Examples of current hearing solutions engineered into many BlackBerry smartphones include BlackBerry® Messenger (BBM™), multimodal vibrations and visual notifications, TTY support and hearing aid compatibility to name a few. For the past two years RIM has been offering customers both open captions and closed caption playback of multimedia on most BlackBerry smartphone models. RIM introduced support for open caption and closed caption playback in October 2008 with the launch of the first BlackBerry® Storm™ smartphone, and has continued to make this feature available for customers with hearing loss on all new BlackBerry smartphones launched in the U.S. as of Oct. 2008. As a result, customers with hearing loss are able to enjoy captioned multimedia content directly on their smartphones –

with automatic activation of the closed caption feature and innovative display settings for closed caption text appearance.

The implementation of closed caption support on BlackBerry smartphones was driven by RIM's sincere desire to address the needs of our customers in the hearing loss community and not as a reaction to any legislative requirements. In the absence of any non-proprietary standard referencing methods required to support closed caption playback on native media players, RIM invested substantial research and development effort and resources to implement a solution for the native Media Player application on BlackBerry smartphones to support closed captioned playback. RIM collaborated with the WGBH National Media Access Group to conduct usability tests of BlackBerry smartphones' closed caption playback support, testing the efficacy of the solution with consumers and experts including persons with hearing loss. RIM also supported the WGBH National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM) efforts to update the free Media Access Generator (MAGpie) caption authoring tool to support creation of closed captioned content that can be played directly on BlackBerry smartphones. Combined with the significant amount of consumer outreach to the hearing loss community to increase awareness of closed caption playback support on BlackBerry smartphones, such efforts demonstrate RIM's commitment to accessibility and to the larger ecosystem of accessible multimedia.

RIM continues to demonstrate our commitment to accessible multimedia by incorporating advanced Internet Browser features through technologies like HTML5 and Adobe Flash support on the BlackBerry® PlayBook™ tablet device: technologies that enable effective playback of closed captioned multimedia delivered over the Internet and played through third party Media Players within the browser. This means that customers with hearing loss can access a range of web-based closed caption programming directly through the Internet Browser.

As a device manufacturer that proactively participates in the accessible multimedia ecosystem, and with a demonstrated history of innovation in the support of closed captioned content for its customers, RIM would like to highlight the following points in its reply comments to the above-captioned proceeding:

I. FCC should not mandate specific technical standards or specifications including interchange and delivery format.

II. FCC should support development of functional and performance objectives for mobile closed captioning.

III. FCC should consider with care the adoption of suitable "safe harbors" for closed caption standards.

DISCUSSION

I. FCC should not mandate specific technical standards or specifications including interchange and delivery format.

RIM supports the FCC's proposal in this proceeding "to refrain from specifying any particular standard for the interchange format or delivery format of IP-delivered video programming at this time, in order to foster the maximum amount of technological innovation"[1]. RIM agrees with Google[2] and Verizon[3] that technical standards or specifications including interchange and delivery format should not be mandated. RIM is one of the few manufacturers with experience in the accessible multimedia ecosystem and has specific experience in developing and implementing closed caption support on mainstream ICT devices to support the needs of customers with hearing loss. By mandating specific standards or specifications, the

[1] NPRM, ¶ 40.
[2] *See* Google Inc Comments at ¶¶ 6-9 (Oct 18, 2011).
[3] *See* Verizon and Verizon Wireless Comments at ¶ 13 (Oct 18, 2011).

FCC risks nullifying the work (e.g., software development, user and expert testing, outreach efforts, etc.) that has already taken place to provide accessible multimedia support for customers with hearing loss. If the FCC mandates a specific standard or specification for closed caption support, existing solutions already available to customers with hearing loss, such as those developed by RIM and its partners, will have to be discontinued, forcing manufacturers to begin again and eliminating the access customers with hearing loss currently have to those solutions. Furthermore, by specifying standards or specifications that have not yet been developed or implemented on mobile ICT devices, the FCC would force vendors that already support closed caption playback to incur additional and unnecessary development work to support different standards or technologies that have not yet been tested for efficacy in a mobile environment.

II. FCC should support development of functional and performance objectives for mobile closed captioning.

RIM agrees with Google[4] that "…so long as a format used to provide captions supports the performance requirements and expectations of consumers and is publicly defined, it should be acceptable for the purpose of delivering content in an accessible form." FCC should encourage the industry (e.g., through the possible update of the existing CEA 708 standard for mobile devices) to come up with practical, accessible and useable functional and performance objectives to enable ICT manufacturers to design and commercialize appropriate solutions for their type of product. Currently, BlackBerry smartphones that support native playback of closed captioned content provide customers with many useful and practical customization options and controls. These closed caption user interface settings include (1) the activation of closed caption playback that is 'On' by default (thereby vastly simplifying the ease of turning on closed caption playback support since it is already 'On' by default), (2) the ability to inherit user-defined font

[4] Google Inc Comments at ¶ 7 (Oct 18, 2011).

settings, and (3) the ability to select the position of caption text. These user-defined display settings for closed caption playback have been well received by customers, are practical approaches to user configuration options of closed caption text display settings, and serve as very solid functional and performance objectives for further consideration by the FCC. Furthermore, the FCC should also support efficacy testing of closed captioned content on ICT devices with displays less than 13 inches to inform its activities and help ensure evidence-based rulemaking.

III. FCC should consider with care the adoption of suitable "safe harbors" for closed caption standards.

Several comments[5] to the NPRM were submitted in favor of a "safe harbor" provision for the SMPTE Timed Text standard (SMPTE-TT) so that not every possible delivery format must be supported by covered entities. As noted above, RIM considers that it would be preferable for the FCC not to single out any particular standard for the interchange format or delivery format of IP-delivered video programming. However, if the FCC decides to exercise its authority to adopt a "safe harbor" at this point, it should adopt a "safe harbor" based on any standards developed within an open process by recognized industry standard-setting organizations. The "safe harbor" should include but not be limited to, 3GPP Timed Text[6] (3GPP-TT) as well as SMPTE-TT standards. The 3GPP-TT standard is specifically designed for wireless mobile environments.

In 2009, RIM implemented support for closed captions using the 3GPP-TT standard on the BlackBerry Storm smartphone to help address market forces and meet the needs of our deaf and hard of hearing customers. The solution continues to be used today by persons with hearing loss. Based on this recommendation, the mobile implementation of the 3GPP-TT standard or the

[5] *See* Consumer Electronic Association Comments at ¶¶ 10-12 (Oct 18, 2011); Microsoft Corporation Comments at ¶ 31 (Oct 18, 2011).

[6] *See* 3GPP Timed Text, Technical Standard 26.245, Transparent End-to-End Packet Switched Streaming Service (PSS) at http://www.3gpp.org/ftp/Specs/html-info/26245.htm (last visited October 30, 2011).

SMPTE-TT standard (when available and ready for mobile), and the development effort required to have native media players support either standard, could mean that the covered mobile entity would comply with the applicable provisions set out in the CVAA.

CONCLUSION

FCC should not mandate technical standards related to closed caption support on ICT devices that are not primarily designed to play IP delivered video programming. If FCC decides to support "safe harbors" at this point, 3GPP-TT (especially for the mobile environment) and SMPTE-TT would be suitable candidates for consideration. More focus should be placed on providing evidence-based functional and performance objectives to support the best mobile closed captioning user experience possible.

Respectfully Submitted,

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